

Role of the Manchester Conservation Commission

The city of Manchester created the Manchester Conservation Commission (MCC) in 1989 to help maintain a balance between our natural resources and the increasing pressure of development. MCC acts as stewards of Manchester's natural resources by:

- ✓ Advising the NH Department of Environmental Services' Wetlands Bureau on local permit applications and enforcement issues.
- ✓ Conducting field investigations of applications for permits for work in wetlands.
- ✓ Assisting Manchester city departments, boards, and committees with environmental planning.
- ✓ Helping interested landowners identify the best protection strategies to preserve their land in its natural state.
- ✓ Coordinating research activities with other organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau.
- ✓ Advising activities of the Manchester Urban Ponds Restoration Program.
- ✓ Providing support for other citywide environmental initiatives such as environmental education, streambank stabilization, and land preservation.

The Manchester Conservation Commission is a seven member volunteer advisory board established by local ordinance (Article XIV) in March of 1989. All members are appointed by the Board of Mayor & Alderman and serve three-year terms. To contact the Commission, write in care of the City Clerk's Office, 1 City Hall Plaza, Manchester NH 03101.

Volunteers Keep the Balance!

Keeping the natural landscape in balance with the urban environment is critical. There are many ways you can become a steward of Manchester's natural resources. Following are a few suggestions:

- ✓ Contact the MCC immediately if you see someone filling in a wetland. The Commission can tell you if the party has a valid permit for the work.
- ✓ Volunteer your time and talents to the MCC!
- ✓ Support laws that protect natural resources and encourage solid waste reduction and recycling.
- ✓ Coordinate neighborhood cleanups of public lands with the Parks and Recreation Department.

Meeting Information

When: First and the third Monday of each month

Time: 6:15 pm

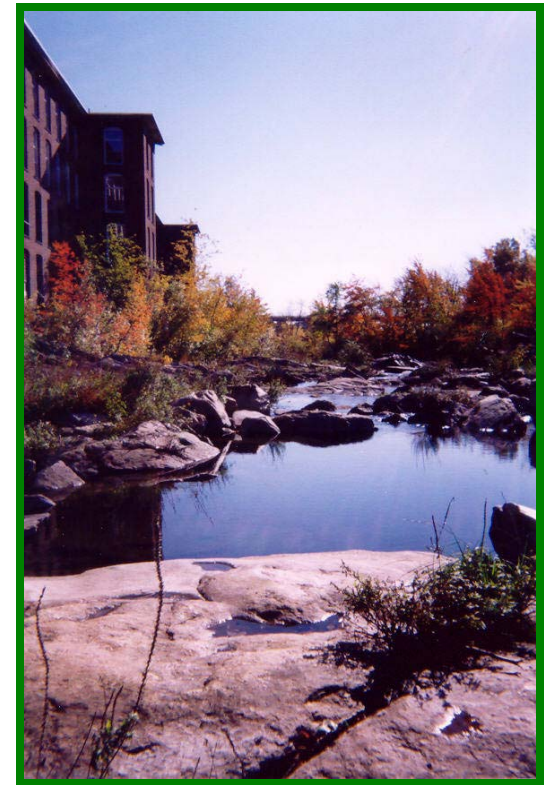
Location: Third Floor, City Hall

All Are Welcome To Attend!

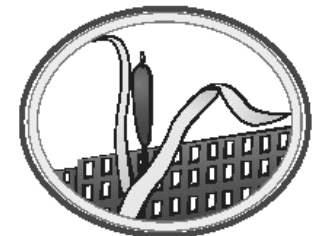


City of Manchester. Photo by Jen Drociak

Stewards of Manchester's Natural Resources



Merrimack River. Photo by Jen Drociak



Manchester Conservation Commission

Wetlands Are A Prime Concern

The Manchester Conservation Commission (MCC) is a municipal advisory board; but certain statutes strengthen its influence. Laws pertaining to wetlands (NHRSA 483-A) specifically give conservation commissions the right to intervene in projects that impact local wetlands.

The NH Wetlands Bureau at the Department of Environmental Services is the agency charged with overseeing wetlands, and seeks recommendations from MCC prior to issuing permits. MCC also assists the Wetlands Bureau by investigating enforcement issues.



Nutts Pond. Photo by Jen Drociak

Wetlands, including marshes, swamps, and bogs, occupy low-lying areas on the landscape. Wetlands are periodically or continually inundated by water and covered by vegetation adapted to saturated soil. Once considered worthless, they are now recognized as important natural resources which provide many ecological and economic benefits.

Wetlands can temporarily store flood waters, reduce shoreline erosion, retain pollutants, and provide food, cover, and nesting habitat for many animals, which are dependent on wetlands for their survival. In addition, many are aesthetically pleasing and offer varied recreational and educational opportunities.

Nature Remains in the Midst of New Hampshire's Largest City

Natural ecosystems such as rivers, lakes, ponds, and wetlands house a great deal of biological plant and animal diversity. Did you know each of these special places can be found within the city limits of Manchester? Following is a brief description of several of these areas worth visiting and protecting.

The Merrimack River

The Merrimack River has always been Manchester's most dominant natural feature. Amoskeag Falls drew Native Americans to the river over 8,000 years ago. Until about 30 years ago, it was neglected and heavily polluted from industrial and municipal wastes. Today, the river supports increasing numbers of anadromous fish such as shad and alewife, which travel up the river from the Atlantic Ocean to ancestral spawning grounds. During the winter, residents can spot bald eagles perched at the river's edge on bare overhanging branches of Eastern white pine trees, searching for fish.



Bald Eagles. Photo by JoAnn O'Shaughnessey

Urban Ponds

Residents of Manchester are fortunate to have the following ponds within the City: Crystal Lake, Dorrs Pond, Maxwell Pond, McQuesten Pond, Nutts Pond, Pine Island Pond, and Stevens Pond. Crystal Lake remains the City's only swimmable pond, while others support recreational uses such as bird watching, walking, biking, paddling, fishing, and ecological education. The Manchester Conservation Commission oversees the "Urban Ponds Restoration Program" (established in 2000) to help restore the historical uses of the ponds, curb pollutant inputs, increase water quality, and provide better recreational opportunities. For more information on this program, call (603) 624-6450 or visit www.manchesternh.gov/UrbanPonds

Hackett Hill Cedar Swamps

The Manchester Cedar Swamp is a 596-acre ecological preserve. It is one of NH's most significant areas containing an assemblage of rare habitats and species, including Atlantic white cedar, black gum, and giant rhododendron.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) acquired the original 350 acres from the City 2001. Another 246 acres was added to the preserve in 2002. TNC and many volunteers created a trail system. TNC is also establishing base-line scientific data to monitor the health of the unique ecosystem and ensure that the ecological integrity of the site is maintained.



Photo by Eric Aldrich